

Series I  
Correspondence,  
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Copies of  
correspondence of  
Paul Palmer,...  
1948...

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## THE READER'S DIGEST

Paul Palmer . Senior Editor

Pleasantville, N.Y.  
2 December 1948

Dear Bogy:

Excuse me for addressing you so familiarly on the envelope of this letter - but at the end of a busy day I simply cannot remember your initials. I was glad to have your comment on the Navy article, and shall be glad to hear what you think of others which we are to publish.

It seems to me that the problem of our military establishment is the most vital problem facing the country today. It is a matter of survival. Obviously, we cannot maintain our free political and economic system if we devote untold billions of dollars to maintaining a big Navy, a large Army, and a supreme strategic air force. It seems to me that we must choose one of these arms as the proper implement for winning the next war, if it comes. I can't see how the Navy can win the next war - Russia has no fleet, almost no Merchant Marine, and is not dependent on overseas supplies. I don't see how we can do the job with a huge army - no matter how big our army is it can never be as big as the Russian's and we have the examples of Hitler and Napoleon on the subject of what happens to land armies invading Russia. I do believe that a war of the future will be won by the nation which controls the skies. And I feel very strongly that this point of view should be put before the American public: I know that most of them believe in it.

We shall of course have examined critically the arguments which are raised against this point of view. Let me know what you think of the matter as our articles appear.

With all best regards,

Sincerely,

Paul

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"TUSITALA"  
HONEYMAN HILL  
Newport, R.I.  
15 December 1948

Dear Paul:

I greatly appreciate your reply to me with reference to my letter to you concerning Mr. Huie's article in the Reader's Digest. I also greatly appreciate the honor you bestowed on me by asking me to comment on other articles. This, I plan to do. However, I have further comments to make on Mr. Huie's article. These follow:

I agree that a future major war will be won by the nation controlling the skies; but will it not also be won by the one controlling the seas? He who controls both will eventually control the land, the ultimate objective of armed forces.

To conclude that we need no strong Navy because Russia has no fleet and a small merchant marine is dangerous. Furthermore, we could answer Mr. Huie's question: "Why should Russia fear an American Navy?", with another question: "Suppose Russia had our Navy and we here; would we feel less secure?" Are we to fight an enemy with only the weapons he has? Would we need no strategic bombers if Russia had none? After German and Japanese naval forces were eliminated our tremendous naval power was still necessary. Mr. Huie states that carrier aviation was not employed in landings against Germany. There were no seaborne landings against Germany proper, but it is a matter of record that carriers were used in landings against German forces in Africa, Southern France, and Italy.

Mr. Huie says the Navy tried to prevent development of strategic air power, shouting its derision of the B-29 all over the Pacific. As a matter of interest, the facts will not support him. The Central Pacific Campaign was carried out largely by naval forces, including Marines, for the primary purpose of establishing bases for the Strategic Air Force. Iwo Jima, captured solely for assisting the Air Force, cost the Navy 21,000 casualties, including 5,000 dead. These are strange methods for preventing the development of strategic air power.

Mr. Huie apparently would combat submarines only at sea. Would he also destroy enemy planes only after they are airborne? The principle is the same. We must destroy submarine bases, and mine their ports and entrance channels; ideal tasks for big carriers.

How use Marines against Russia? Many positions in prospective Russian occupied territory suitable for air bases are susceptible for amphibious seizure and isolation by naval air until land based air is established. One only needs to look at

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the area around the Persian Gulf to see this. Waters leading to this area are relatively free from submarines. It is cheaper for the United States to get forces there and supply them by sea than it is for the Russians to get them there over mountains and deserts. If the distance bombers fly to their target is halved, their effectiveness is multiplied by four; if quartered, their effectiveness is multiplied by sixteen. The statement that we already have a ring of great air bases around Russia is a gross exaggeration. Additional bases must be captured and defended. See the attached copy of "Letter to Airmen" for another writer's views on this subject.

The charge that the Navy placed restrictions on flights of land-based bombers off-shore was effectively refuted by Mr. Hanson Baldwin in the NEW YORK TIMES on October 13, 1946 (a copy of this article is attached). But the effort to keep carrier planes from flying over land (either by law or by withholding appropriations) is this kind of thinking.

Mr. Huie's statement about the Navy furnishing medical care to Congressmen is correct but does not tell the whole story. Both the Army and the Navy are required by law to furnish medical care for certain government employees. For example, Mr. John Foster Dulles was treated recently at the Army's Walter Reed Hospital.

The unfortunate incorrectness of many of Mr. Huie's statements on matters with which I, as a simple layman, am familiar renders his whole argument specious to me. Do you not feel that a strong Air Force and a strong Navy form a perfect team, each giving the other a flexibility unattainable by one alone? The strength of a whole team (Army, Navy, Air Force) is found by multiplying, rather than adding, their individual strengths.

Much of the life blood of our industry comes to our shores by water; virtually all of the life blood of our over-seas forces in war goes to them by water. In peace and war we live by the sea. Before persuading the American people to reduce to relative impotency the instrument by which they have thus lived, and continue to live, does it not appear imperative that we not adopt the thesis, without thorough investigation and positive proof, that naval strategists are 100% wrong while others with an opposing view are 100% right.

This is not intended to be a statement of the case for the Navy, but just a few random thoughts from one who would like to see fair play. I look to publications like READER'S DIGEST as an open forum, rather than a medium for the exposition of only one point of view.

I hope that you find the above thoughts worthy of study.  
With best wishes to you for a very Merry Christmas, I am,

Very sincerely yours,

G. Bogart Blakeley

Mr. Paul Palmer, Senior Editor  
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